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A PLAIN
ACCOUNT
OF
FAITH
IN
JESUS CHRIST.

In REMARKS on several Passages in the
Letters on THERON and ASPASIO.



L O N D O N :

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ERRATA.

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R E M A R K S •

O N S E V E R A L

P A S S A G E S

I N T H E

L E T T E R S

O N

T H E R O N and *A S P A S I O*.

TH E Writer of the Letters, which I am now to consider, complains that ‘amidst a Multitude of Disputes about the Christian Religion, that have employed the Minds of Men, the Capital Question about Acceptance with God has been much mistaken*.’ Not by himself we may suppose, but by those whom he calls ‘the most zealous popular Preachers†;’ and, if by them, consequently by the generality of their
B Hearers;

Hearers ; for, if but few had embraced their Doctrine, they had not been Popular.

But I cannot help thinking, at present, that it will be much safer to follow the Directions of these Preachers than his. For *they* ‘ have generally made the Question to run thus : How, are we to be exercised, and under what Influence, prompting, or seconding ? What shall we do, or endeavour ? What shall we feel ? or, *what doth God require of us, that we may escape his Wrath and Curse due to us for Sin* ? But, this Author tells us, ‘ that the first Question ought to be, can any doing, feeling, endeavouring, any Exercise of the Soul, either prompted, or seconded, be of any avail to us in this Matter ? Or, whether or not did Christ finish upon the Cross all that God requires, every requisite, without exception, to procure acceptance for, and give relief to the guilty Conscience of the most profane Wretch that lives*’. And he observes, that ‘ he who attempts to do any thing easy or difficult, under the notion of an Act of believing, or any other Act,

‘ in

‘ in order to his acceptance with God,
 ‘ only heaps up more Wrath against
 ‘ himself*.’ And agreeably to this he
 assures us that ‘ the whole New Testa-
 ‘ ment speaks aloud, that as to the matter
 ‘ of acceptance with God, there is no
 ‘ difference betwixt one Man and ano-
 ‘ ther :—No difference betwixt the best
 ‘ accomplished Gentleman, and the most
 ‘ infamous Scoundrel : — No difference
 ‘ betwixt the most virtuous Lady, and
 ‘ the vilest Prostitute :—No difference
 ‘ betwixt the most reverend Judge, and
 ‘ the most odious Criminal, standing con-
 ‘ victed before him, and receiving the
 ‘ just Sentence of Death from his Mouth :
 ‘ —In a Word, no difference betwixt
 ‘ the most fervent Devotee, and the
 ‘ greatest Ringleader in Profaneness and
 ‘ Excess†.’

Some perhaps will be ready to add :
 ‘ And no difference betwixt a Believer,
 ‘ and an Unbeliever :—No difference be-
 ‘ twixt the true Christian, and an Infidel’.
 But to do the Author justice, it will be
 proper to observe that he speaks of Faith,
 or believing in Christ, as that without
 which we can’t be accepted of God, and

B 2

my

my principal Design in these Papers is to examine what he has offered upon this Subject.

Faith, as he tells us is ‘ the belief of
 ‘ a Truth, or one’s being persuaded that
 ‘ a Report is true*.’ Mr. Guthrie teaches
 us that true justifying Faith, ‘ is not
 ‘ simply the believing of any Sentence
 ‘ that is written, or can be thought
 ‘ upon†:’ This is printed in Capital Letters, and ironically ‘ recommended as
 ‘ a Saying worthy to be kept in remem-
 ‘ brance by all Readers and Hearers of
 ‘ the popular Doctrine,’ and we are as-
 sured that ‘ if the Gospel History be true,
 ‘ every one who believes it shall be
 ‘ saved§.’

And yet I little question, whether we must not put something else besides a simple belief of a Truth, or one’s being persuaded that the Report of the Gospel is true, into even our Author’s Notion of that Faith which is justifying; for he tells us, that ‘ *Paul* calls upon some, whom
 ‘ he himself looked upon as Believers,
 ‘ to examine themselves whether they
 ‘ were in the Faith, plainly intimating
 ‘ that they could not warrantably be as-
 ‘ sured

* Page 283: † Page 265. § Page 333.

‘ fured of their Happy State, by any
 ‘ Exercifes of the Mind, without the
 ‘ Fruits of Faith, or the self-denied Works
 ‘ of Obedience:’ * And that, ‘ we are
 ‘ to confider Faith as a principle of Life
 ‘ and Action†:’ That ‘ Love is the
 ‘ Activity of that Life which a Man ob-
 ‘ tains by Faith; for Faith worketh by
 ‘ Love:’ That ‘ let a Man talk like an
 ‘ Angel of the Things of God, if he
 ‘ wants this Love he is nothing‡:’ That
 ‘ the Favour of God can only be enjoyed
 ‘ in Studying to do thofe Things which
 ‘ are well-pleafing in his Sight.’ §

This is found Doctrine, the Truth
 which is after Godlinefs. And as it evi-
 dently fhews us how it is with thofe who
are Juft before God||: So it alfo fhews us
 how it is with all who have a Right Faith;
 and that an Affent to the Truth of the
 Gospel, that has not a good Influence upon
 us, and does not lead us to obey it, can-
 not be the Faith which the Scriptures
 fpeak of as Juftifying and Saving. This
 Affent, indeed is effential to this Faith;
 but it is far from being the Whole of it.
 It is *one Thing*, but not all that is *needful*.

B 3

It

* Page 334. † P 4c6. ‡ P 4c8. § P 4c9.
 || Rom. ii. 13.

It is the more proper to take particular Notice of this, because it is far from being with us, as it was with those who lived in the Days of the Apostles. For then the Gospel of God concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord was every where spoken against, and it met with the most violent Opposition : And, as they who made a Profession of believing it, could expect no other than to suffer Persecution, it may reasonably be thought, that there were but few persuaded of the Truth of it, who did not feel it working effectually in them, and who did not bring forth the Fruits of it. But Christianity is now the Religion of our Country, and we are trained up in the belief of it from our very Infancy, and wicked as the Nation is, it is yet Reputable, because fashionable to believe it, and few there are, comparatively Speaking, but will readily say that they do indeed believe it ; but since there may be many amongst us who have only a Faith without Works, it may be of fatal Consequence to follow our Author in telling them, that ‘ if they hold the Gospel to be true, this is Faith*.’

He

He owns that ' the popular Preachers
 ' admit something like the scriptural No-
 ' tion of believing into a Corner of their
 ' Account of Faith, under the Title of
 ' the *Assent of Faith* : ' But then he com-
 plains, that ' it lies in so remote and dark
 ' a Corner as scarcely to be seen ; and
 ' if it be at all Thought of, little or no
 ' Account is made of it ; yea, it is often
 ' marked with dishonourable Epithets.
 ' Hence we find some talking of the Va-
 ' nity of an historical and speculative
 ' Faith ; yet, we may safely affirm, that
 ' he who admits no other Speculation
 ' about the Divine Grace, but what arises
 ' from the Gospel History, is a Child of
 ' God, and an Heir of eternal Life.*
 But altho' these Preachers often Speak of
 an historical and speculative Faith as vain
 and useless, we cannot infer from this
 that they make little or no Account of
 this Assent ; for in Fact they look upon
 it as essential to the Faith, they consider
 as saving, and as being, as necessary to it
 as the Foundation is to the Building ; and
 yet, consistently with this, they may say
 with St. James, *what doth it profit my Bre-*
thren, tho' a Man say he hath Faith and
have

* Ibid.

*have not Works, can Faith save him? Thou believest that there is one God, thou dost well; the Devils also believe and tremble: But wilt thou know, O vain Man, that Faith without Works is dead, being alone.**

An Assent to the Gospel, or persuasion of it's Truth supposes the Knowledge of it. For we can no more believe that of which we are ignorant, than that of which we have not heard. But as to both Knowledge and Assent, they are to be considered as means to the End, and no Account is to be made of either, any further than it answers it's End. What signifies our Knowledge of God, if it does not lead us to glorify him as God? † And how vain is our Assent to the Truth of the Gospel, if it does not lead us to obey it? *Simon* the Sorcerer believed *Philip* Preaching the Things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ, and yet he was in the Gall of Bitterness, and in the bond of Iniquity. ‡ As if we hear, so if we believe the Sayings of Christ, and do them not, we may well be likened unto a foolish Man that built his House upon

* Chap. ii. 14, 16. † Rom. i, 21. ‡ Acts viii. 13, 23.

upon the Sand.‡ But to proceed to another Point.

‘ That Christ died, that he gave his
 ‘ Life a Ransom for many, is a Truth
 ‘ fully ascertained in the Scripture, and
 ‘ established there, firm as a Rock, for
 ‘ the Relief of the shipwrecked and the
 ‘ Desperate* :’ But the popular Preachers
 go a little further, and put this into their
 Notion of Faith, that it is a *Persuasion*
that Christ died for me : And, ‘ this is
 ‘ a Point, says our Author, which the
 ‘ Scripture no where ascertains; so far
 ‘ from it, that it oftens affirms the final
 ‘ Perdition of many, not meerly hearers
 ‘ of the Gospel, but who have received it
 ‘ with Joy†.’ And it might have been
 added, ‘ many who for a while believed
 ‘ the Word‡. But that we may see on
 which Side the Truth lies, it will be pro-
 per to observe, that as our Saviour assures
 us, that he gave his Life a Ransom for
many|| ; so the Apostle tells us that he gave
 his Life a Ransom for *all** ; and that he
 tasted Death, not as our Author speaks
 for *Man*, for the Sins of *Men*§ ; but
 for

|| Mat. vii. 26. * Page 13. † Ibid. ‡ Luke
 viii. 13. || Mat. xx. 28. * 1 Tim. ii. 6. § Page
 364

for *every Man**, and if for every Man, then for me.

And there is a Sense in which these Words of the Apostles are evidently true, even tho' understood not only of such as shall be saved, but of such as shall finally perish. For, as God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life:† So Christ has expressed his Love to us in giving himself to the same End, according to the Will of God and our Father. For he was lifted up on the Cross, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal Life.‡

Had the Gospel taught us no other than this, that Christ died for *many*, every one sensible of his Sin and his Misery must needs have been at an uncertainty, and consequently in fear as to his Acceptance with God. Our Author indeed, tells us that ‘ many finding Rest here, have been
‘ determined to follow Christ, at all Ha-
‘ zards, having no other Reason to give
‘ for their Attachment; but, *Thou hast*
‘ *the Words of eternal Life*||.’ But where
there

* Heb. ii. 9. † John iii. 16. ‡ ver. 14, 15.

there is some Hazard, there can be no certainty, and there must be some Fear. And how can this relieve us to say, that Christ has the Words of eternal Life, on supposition, that we are uncertain whether he has these Words for us, or whether we have any Concern in what he has done.

It is justly observed, that ‘ what Christ has done is that which pleases God ;’ But I see no Reason to add, that it ‘ is that which quiets the guilty Conscience of Man, as soon as he knows it : So that whenever he hears of it, he has no Occasion for any other Question but this, *is it true or not ?* If he finds it true he is happy*.’ For he can reap no Comfort from it unless he is persuaded, or at least has some Hopes, that what Christ has done was for him.

It is said indeed, that ‘ the Gospel which foretells the final Perdition of so many of it’s Hearers, so many seriously and zealously exercised about it, can never warrant us to persuade every one who hears it to believe, that Christ died for him ; unless we shall say, that Christ died for every individual of Mankind, and consequently that none of
‘ Mankind

‘ Mankind owe their Salvation wholly to
 ‘ his Death*.’ But to this it may be
 answered that since the Scripture assures us
 that none, who repent and believe, shall fi-
 nally perish, and since it also assures us
 that their Salvation is wholly owing to the
 Death of Christ, it must likewise assure
 us, that Christ died for all, that whoso-
 ever repenteth and believeth should be
 saved. And since our being seriously and
 zealously exercised about the Gospel is a
 Token for good that we either do, or shall
 repent and believe, I see no Warrant that
 any one has to discourage Persons in such
 Circumstances, and to fill them with the
 Fears of their final Perdition.

Christ having given himself a Ransom
 for all, a good Foundation is laid for that
 with which our Author is much offended.
The offering Christ and his Benefits to all.

‘ The Preachers, says he, whose Honour is
 ‘ concerned in what they call the *Gospel-*
 ‘ *Offer*, commonly take hold of the pro-
 ‘ mises of the Gospel, which, it is easy to
 ‘ shew are made only to Believers, and by
 ‘ the Dint of their Authority, and the
 ‘ help of a little Art, extend them to all
 ‘ their Hearers without Exception.’† But
 is

is there any colour of Reason for saying, that such a Promise as this is made only to Believers? Let the Wicked forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon*. No, Mercy and Pardon, are evidently promised to every Sinner, to engage him to forsake his wicked Way and unrighteous Thoughts.

The popular Preachers are spoken of as, ' trying which of them shall lay the ' most convenient Foundation for their ' Universal Offer, and the particular Application or Appropriation connected ' with it†.' But in this the Doctrine of many of these Preachers is not truly represented. For altho' they teach us, that Christ's dying for all, that whosoever believeth in him should be saved, is a good Foundation for a Universal Offer of the Benefits of his Death; and altho' they encourage every one of their Hearers to make a particular Application of this to himself; nay, press him to say in his Heart, Christ died for me, that if I believe, I may be saved, yet they do not

C

connect

* Isai. iv. 7. † Page 24.

connect an Appropriation of these Benefits with this Offer, and are far from encouraging any, but those whom they look upon as true Believers, to ‘ put an End
 ‘ to their Anxiety, by exercising the appropriating Act of Faith, or, which is
 ‘ the same Thing, by affirming with confidence the Goodness of their Title to
 ‘ Life*.’

This Appropriation is the same with the Assurance of Hope, and cannot be said to be essential to Faith, but presupposes it. For it is one of the Fruits which Faith sometimes produces not in all true Believers indeed; but in those who are satisfied that they are in the Number of these happy Persons. It is therefore justly spoken of as ‘ an Enjoyment proposed
 ‘ to them who believed, which they were
 ‘ called to follow after, and give all Diligence to obtain.’ And ‘ no Man can
 ‘ be charged with the Sin of disbelieving the Gospel, for doubting if he be a good
 ‘ Christian. For his chief Hazard lies
 ‘ on the other Side; seeing Self-conceit
 ‘ naturally leads every one to judge too
 ‘ favourably of himself; yea, we find the
 ‘ Apostles ready to quash the Confidence
 ‘ of

‘ of those, who were ready to conclude
 ‘ their State was changed, by such awful
 ‘ Sentences as this. He that saith I know
 ‘ him and keepeth not his Command-
 ‘ ments is a Liar, and the Truth is not in
 ‘ him*.’

Nothing makes more for the comfort and pleasure of Life than this Appropriation. It is therefore the Wisdom of every one to seek after it, by being stedfast, unmoveable, and always abounding in the Work of the Lord : But there is no Reason to condemn all those as Unbelievers, who are not so happy as to have attained it. We may have the proper scriptural Faith in Christ, altho’ we have not an Assurance that we shall be saved by his Death. But as we cannot have this Faith unless we assent to the Truth of the Gospel, so it cannot be thought that we yield this Assent, unless we are persuaded, that if we believe we shall be saved ; For this is evidently a main Point in the Report of the Gospel, *That whosoever believeth shall be saved*†.

But then it ought to be observed that we may Assent to the Truth of the Gospel, and we may be persuaded that Christ

C 2

died

died for us, that if we believe in him we shall be saved, and yet not have that Faith which the Scripture speaks of as justifying and saving; and if it be asked what more is necessary; I answer, *the receiving Christ Jesus the Lord**. The Gospel Offer of Christ and his Benefits calls for this Act of Faith; and if this be wanting, it's other Acts will be of no service.

This our Author looks upon as nothing more than the assenting to the Truth of the Gospel, and he speaks of it as unintelligible, if it means any thing else; for he tells us that 'he can easily understand
' how a Man may be said to receive a
' Testimony, when he admits the Truth
' of it, or how he refuses it, when he re-
' jects it as false†.' But surely we may as easily understand how a Man may be said to receive a Gift which is offered him, and which he highly values, or how he refuses it, when he rejects it as if it were of no worth.

But he adds, 'if more be meant by *receiving Christ* than knowing him, or believing on him, then I am ready to shew, that more than *Faith* is meant, namely,
' Faith with it's Fruits and Effectst.'

But

* Joh. iii. 12. † Page 373. ‡ Ibid.

But altho' the receiving Christ is indeed the Fruit and Effect of the Knowledge and Belief of the Gospel-Testimony concerning him, yet it is the same with that Faith in him which is justifying and saving, and expressive of it's Nature.

That we may know in what Sense Christ is to be received, it will be proper to take Notice of some Things in the Report of the Gospel concerning him. For we are to receive him as he is therein set before us. And whatever Notion of Christ is given us in the Gospel with a View to recommend him to us, the objecting against him, considered under that Notion is an Argument of our not being in the Number of those who receive him.

Since therefore the Gospel Speaks of Christ as a Saviour, the only Saviour of Men*, and one able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by him†, it is necessary that we receive him as our Saviour, looking to him, trusting in him for Acceptance with God and eternal Salvation, at the same time that we yield ourselves unto God as his Servants; and that after the Apostle's Example, we count all Things but loss, that we may win

C 3

Christ,

* Act. iv. 12. † Heb. vii. 23.

Christ, and be found in him, not having our own Righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith*.

And since the Gospel assures us, that Christ is that Prophet whom the Lord our God hath raised up unto us, and whom we are to hear in all Things whatsoever he has said unto us†, we must receive him as that Prophet, looking on him as an infallible Teacher, and making his Word our Rule for Faith and Practice.

And since we also learn from the Gospel, that God hath exalted Christ to be a Prince as well as Saviour, and hath given him a Name which is above every Name, that at the Name of Jesus every Knee should bow, and that every Tongue should confess that that Jesus Christ is Lord, it is also necessary that we receive him as our Lord, owning and submitting to his Authority, and fully resolving, by the Assistance of his Grace, to do whatsoever he has commanded us.

The Necessity and Advantages of receiving Christ may be inferred from that of St. John, *He came unto his own, and his own*

* Phil. iii. 9, 10. † Act. iii. 22.

*own received him not, and not believing on him they were condemned. But as many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name**. They are all, without Exception, the Children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus†; and if Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joynt-Heirs with Christ‡. This Honour have all who receive him. This is their peculiar Privilege : But as for the Despisers and Rejecters of Christ, notwithstanding their Knowledge of the Gospel, and their Assent to the Truth of it, they have neither Part nor Lot in this Matter, For their Heart is not right in the Sight of God.

This distinguishes the real Christians from those who are Christians only in Name and by Profession. As therefore we would not deceive ourselves with vain Hopes of Salvation by Christ, it concerns us to see that we do indeed receive him. And to prevent all Mistakes concerning this Matter, it will be proper to enquire whether we obey the Lord Jesus. For as we may say that unless we receive him, we do not truly believe on him, so we may also

* Joh. i. 11, 12. † Gal. iii. 26. ‡ Rom. viii. 17.

also say that unless we obey him, we do not receive him.

The absolute Necessity of obeying Christ is evidently taught us in the Scripture. For we are therein expressly assured that he is the Author of eternal Salvation to all them that obey him*; but that he is a Stone of Stumbling and a Rock of Offence to them that stumble at the Word being Disobedient†. And that he shall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord and from the Glory of his Power‡.

Obedience to Christ may be considered as the Fruit of Faith, and as essential to it, or inseparably connected with it. It is that by which Faith is made perfect||. And that by which true Faith is distinguished from that which is counterfeit; a dead Faith which cannot profit from that which is justifying and saving. And as this Faith is the Gift* and Operation† of God,

* Heb. v. 9. † 1 Pet. ii. 8. ‡ 2 Thes. i. 7, 8, 9.
 || Jam. ii. 22. * Eph. ii. 8. † Col. ii. 12.

God, so it may justly be said that at the same Time that he gives us truly to believe, or works in us a right Faith, he changes our Hearts and makes us obedient. We are then his Workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good Works*, and being made free from Sin we become Servants unto God. Our Author tells us that, ‘ It is confounding the simple Notion
 ‘ of the Faith given us in the Scripture
 ‘ (an Assent to the Truth of the Gospel)
 ‘ that our Preachers more especially play
 ‘ their Game, and put the Change upon
 ‘ us, leading us most effectually to establish our own Righteousness†.’ And it must be owned that this is to act directly contrary to the Gospel. But I see no Reason for charging those as guilty of this, who teach us, with St. *James*, that the Faith that is alone without Works, without Obedience can’t profit us‡; or that the only Faith that justifies us, makes us obedient, the sincere Servants of God; and who also teach us, that this Faith does not justify us as making us obedient, but only as receiving Christ Jesus as the Lord our Righteousness, and so looking to him and trusting in him for all the Blessings,

* Eph. ii. 10. † Page 282. ‡ Chap. ii. 14.

sings he has purchased. But of this I shall have occasion to speak further in some following Remarks.

To shew how our Preachers confound the simple Notion of Faith, it is observed, that ‘ among other Arts they are very remarkable for an uncommon use of Similitudes and metaphorical Descriptions of Faith :’ But for this they are rather to be commended than censured. For it follows, ‘ the common Use of these is to help our Attention and Understanding to a more ready Apprehension of the Things reported to us.’

But it is added that ‘ *Their* Use of them serves to amuse our Fancy, and confound our Understanding, to stimulate our Pride, and set in Motion our several Passions in Subserviency thereto*.’ This is roundly affirmed, but the Proof of it is wanting.

It must be owned indeed that ‘ they represent Faith as having Hands and Feet†,’ that is, in Speaking of Faith they make use of Metaphors which are borrowed from the Hands and the Feet, but not without Reason ; for they meet with these Metaphors in the Holy Scriptures ;

tures ; as for Instance, our blessed Saviour calls on those who labour and are heavy laden to *come* to him, as Disciples to their Master, that they may learn of him, and find Rest unto their Souls* ; and Believers are said to have *fled* for Refuge†, and this latter Expression as well as the former is a Figure of Speech taken from the Feet. We also read of *receiving Christ*‡, and *laying* hold on the Hope set before us||, and these are Metaphors borrowed from the Hands.

Is is further observed concerning these Preachers that ‘ they ascribe various Ideas
 ‘ of Motion and Action to Faith, and
 ‘ though a very simple Motion well meant,
 ‘ may do the Business, yet that, which
 ‘ has the greatest Activity in it, is com-
 ‘ mended to us as far the best. Thus we
 ‘ are taught by Mr. R. Erskine, though a
 ‘ slow and simple Motion well meant, if
 ‘ it be real and upright, is what has the
 ‘ Promise, *him that cometh unto me I will*
 ‘ *in no wise cast out*, yet the Scripture
 ‘ speaks of a Hastening, Striving, Running,
 ‘ Fighting and Wrestling*.’ But is it
 not proper to commend that which the
 Scripture

* Mat. xi. 28. † Heb. vi. 12. ‡ Joh. i. 12.
 || Heb. vi. 18. * Page 285.

Scripture commends, and to speak as that speaks ?

If any make use of Metaphors which they find in the Scriptures, in a Sense different from that in which they are used by the Sacred Writers, they deserve to be censured ; but, if they cannot justly be charged with any Thing of this Nature, the Reflections cast upon them, for their Use of these Metaphors, will fall upon the Holy Spirit, by whose Inspiration the Scriptures were written. Thus we ought to think of that Reflection which has been already mentioned, ‘ the amusing our Fancy, and confounding our Understanding.’

And the same may be said of this that here follows ‘ If we deprive their Faith of it’s Hands, Feet, and every Idea of Motion, we shall be at the greatest Loss to know what it is*.’ For altho’ this looks like a retracting of the former Reflection, and seems to intimate, that Faith cannot be explained without the Use of Metaphors ; yet it is very evident, that, according to our Author’s Sentiments, they are far from setting it before us in so clear a Light, as that Notion of it which
he

* Ibid.

he himself has given us. For he adds,
 ' whereas nothing is more easy to be un-
 ' derstood than the Belief of the Truth,
 ' or one's being persuaded that a Report
 ' is true.' And as a farther Argument
 that this Notion of Faith is preferable to
 that which we may have from any meta-
 phorical Expressions he observes, that ' it
 ' is likewise easy to be understood that
 ' no small Motion is produced in our
 ' Minds by Doubtfulness, Anxiety, and
 ' our various Efforts to quiet our selves,
 ' but no sooner does the Salutary Truth
 ' appear than all that Motion ceases.'
 But in Answer to this I need only repeat
 what has been already observed, and fully
 proved, namely that a simple Belief of the
 Truth, or a Persuasion that a Report is
 true is not that Faith which the Scripture
 Speaks of as justifying and saving. No,
 for as he that saith *I know him*, so he that
 saith *I believe in him*, truly believe in him,
 so as to be saved by him, and keepeth
 not his Commandments, is a Liar and
 the Truth is not in him. That our Minds
 therefore may be free from all Doubtful-
 ness and Anxiety, we must not only know
 that we believe the Truth of the Gospel,
 but that we obey it.

We are told indeed that ‘ every
 ‘ Doctrine which teaches us to do, or
 ‘ endeavour any Thing toward our Ac-
 ‘ ceptance with God, stands opposed
 ‘ to the Doctrine of the Apostles, which
 ‘ instead of directing us what to do, sets
 ‘ before us all that the most disquieted
 ‘ Conscience can require in order to Ac-
 ‘ ceptance with God, as already done and
 ‘ finished by Jesus Christ*.’ And it is cer-
 tain that the Apostles teach us, that God
 hath made us accepted in Christ, in whom
 we have Redemption, through his Blood,
 the forgiveness of Sins, according to the
 Riches of his Grace†: But then it is also
 certain, that they direct us to follow Ho-
 lineſs‡, and to be doers of the Word and
 not Hearers only||, and that, if we do not
 observe these Directions, we deceive our-
 selves in fancying that we are accepted
 of God through Jesus Christ: For they
 also assure us that without Holineſs no
 Man shall see the Lord; and that they
 who are only Hearers, and not doers of
 the Law are not just before God§.

But that one Part of the Apostles Doct-
 rine is not inconsistent with the other,
 8 will

* Page 11. † Eph. i. 6, 7. ‡ Heb. xii. 14.
 || Jam. ii. 22. § Rom. ii. 13.

will evidently appear from observing, that what Christ has done, and not our Holiness, or Obedience is the Ground of our Acceptance with God. If, therefore, we ask who are the happy Persons whom God does graciously accept, and who consequently shall have everlasting Life ? To answer agreeably to the Apostles Sentiments, we must say, that they are such as being made free from Sin are become the Servants of God, and have their Fruit unto Holiness. But if this be the Question, what gives them a Right to this Blessedness, to what is it owing ? Is it the Wages due to them for their Holiness and Obedience ? The proper Answer is *no*, for they have Sinned, and the Wages of Sin is Death ; but they shall have this Blessedness as the Gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord*.

We need not therefore scruple to say that the Persons, the Holy and Obedient have a Right through Jesus Christ, to the Blessings of the Gospel, exclusive of those who are called ‘ unqualified Sinners, ‘ or those who are nothing else but poor ‘ indigent, guilty Sinners,’ that is those who, to use the Apostles Words are foolish,

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* Rom. vi. 22. 23.

disobedient, deceived, serving divers Lusts and Pleasures* : But altho' the Holy and Obedient, the true Believers may very well be said to have that Right to the Blessings of the Gospel which others have not, yet the Ground of their Right does not lie in their distinguishing Qualifications. It must be owned indeed that ' it cannot lie in any Thing common to both; for in that Case the Unqualified would have as good a Right as the Qualified.' But whereas from this it is inferred, that ' it must lie in that which constitutes the Difference betwixt them†; this Inference is not just. For the Difference betwixt them we Speak of is this, they who are called the *Qualified* are Holy and Obedient; whereas *the Unqualified* are Wicked and Disobedient; but then it ought to be observed, that it is not the Holiness and Obedience of those that gives them this Right; no, but that which Christ has done, his having given himself to suffer and die, that whosoever so believeth on him as to obey him should be accepted of God, and finally saved.

Are any saying, ' but if in this Sense Christ died for all, then the indigent and
' guilty

‘ guilty Sinners, as well as others may
 ‘ lay claim to the Benefits of his Death ;’
 it may be sufficient to Answer, ‘ that they
 ‘ may indeed lay claim to these Benefits
 ‘ as being offered them in the Gospel ;
 ‘ but they cannot claim them as being
 ‘ actually theirs, till they have a right Faith
 ‘ in Jesus ; and they only have this Faith
 ‘ who are Holy and Obedient.’ We may
 justly say that a Saviour is provided for
 even the chief of Sinners ; to such the Blessings
 he has purchased are proposed, and
 his Grace will be magnified on as many
 of them as receive him by Faith as their
 Saviour ; but all who thus receive him
 must own him as their Lord and obey his
 Gospel.

There are Evils threatned in the Word
 of God, as well as Blessings promised ;
 and that we may know which we are to
 look upon as our Portion, we must enquire
 what is our real Character, whether we
 are Wicked or Righteous, whether we
 obey the Truth, or obey Unrighteousness.
 If Wicked or Disobedient, we may well
 look for many Sorrows* : But if Righteous
 and Obedient, the Lord will bless us, and

D 3

with

* Psal. xxxii. 10.

with his Favour will he Compafs us as with a Shield*.

Our Author complains that ‘ as for
 ‘ the bare Work finished on the Crofs, or
 ‘ the bare Report about it, however true
 ‘ we think it, fo far have we mistaken it,
 ‘ that, fetting afide our active Operations
 ‘ about it, we do not fee what Comfort
 ‘ or Benefit can be derived from it? We
 ‘ confider the Gospel as furnifhing us
 ‘ with fo many good and excellent Ma-
 ‘ terials to Work upon ; and our whole
 ‘ Comfort and Benefit arifes from the
 ‘ proper Performance and Succels of our
 ‘ Labour†?’ But what Colour of Reason
 is there for the Hopes of receiving any
 Benefit from this Work, if we have no
 active Operations about it. *Ye will not
 come to me that ye might have Life*, faid
 our blefled Saviour to the Jews‡, and
 the Cafe is the fame if we will not look
 to him that we may be faved ; or will not
 take his Yoke upon us and learn of him ;
 and coming, looking, taking a Yoke upon
 us and Learning are active Operations,
 as well as obeying the Gospel. To thefe
 Operations, the Work of Chrift on the
 Crofs encourages us : But it fpeaks no
 Comfort

* Pfal. v. 7. † Page 85. ‡ Joh. v. 40.

Comfort to those who will not be found in them, and yet it does not follow from this, that our whole Comfort and Benefit arises from the proper Performance of them. For had it not been for the Work of Christ on the Cross, all our Performances must necessarily have been vain and useless.

There are two Things which the Scripture Speaks of as the Ground of our Rejoycing : The one is Christ Jesus and that which he hath done and suffered for us ; and the other is our own Holiness and Obedience ; or if you will, the Work of Christ without us, and the Work of his Spirit within us. *We says the Apostle are of the Circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit and rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no Confidence in the Flesh**, God forbid, that I should Glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ†. And yet he thus Speaks, *our rejoycing is this, the Testimony of our Conscience, that, in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with Fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our Conversation in the World‡*. We are to rejoyce in Christ Jesus as having been made perfect, and become the Author of
eternal

* Phil. iii. 3. † Gal. vi. 14. ‡ 2 Cor. i. 12.

eternal Salvation to all them that obey him*. Other Foundation for our Hopes of the Divine Favour and Acceptance no Man can lay than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus†. It tends to keep us from Despair, and to give us some Reason for Comfort and Joy to think, that, according to the Report of the Gospel, Repentance and Remission of Sins are preached to us in his Name, and that by him all that believe are justified from all Things from which they could not be justified by the Law of *Moses*: But we rejoyce in the Testimony of our Conscience that we have had our Conversation in Godly Sincerity, as an Evidence of our being true Believers in Christ, and that God hath made us Accepted in the Beloved, and that we have Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins, according to the Riches of his Grace.

It is freely owned that in the Epistle to the *Galatians*, the Apostle shews us at large, that however zealous Christians we may be, if we add any Thing to what Christ has done, as the Ground of our Justification or Acceptance with God, Christ shall profit us nothing: But then he

* Heb. v. 9. † 1 Cor. iii. 11.

he is far from telling us that, ‘ he who is
 ‘ justified is perfectly on a Level with all
 ‘ his Fellow Creatures, and can see no
 ‘ difference betwixt himself and those who
 ‘ shall finally perish*.’ For in the same
 Epistle he Speaks of the Faith which avails
 us in Christ Jesus as Working by Love†, and again uses the same Expressions, only instead of Faith, it is the *New Creature*‡. And he observes, that they that are Christ’s have crucified the Flesh with the Affections and Lusts§; and that he that soweth to the Flesh shall of the Flesh reap Corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap Life Everlasting§. So that it may well be said that, in the Thoughts of this Apostle, there is as great a Difference in the Characters of Men as there will be in their State. And yet consistently with this, he might very well teach us, that we are not to add any Thing to what Christ has done as the Ground of our Justification, or Acceptance with God; for altho’ he speaks of these Qualifications, or Requisites as being so necessary, that they, who are destitute of them, can have no Reason to think

* Page 287. † Gal. v. 6. ‡ Ch. vi. 15.
 § Ch. v. 24. § Ch. vi. 8.

think that they have a *Part* in this Blessedness, yet he is far from asserting that they give us a Right to it.

The Gospel of our Salvation, the Gospel of God, is the Word of his Grace*, and the Doctrine according to Godliness†. For it displays the exceeding Riches of the Grace of God in his Kindness toward us through Jesus Christ, and yet nothing can be more proper to engage us to serve him. The more therefore we magnify the Grace of God in our Salvation, and the more concerned we are to live to his Praise and Glory, the more we have of a Spirit suitable to the Nature of the Gospel. And whatever tends to lessen the Grace of God in our Eyes, or to make us careless and negligent in his Service, ought to be rejected with Abhorrence, as being contrary to this Doctrine.

The Gospel may well be considered as the Word of God's Grace, when it teaches us, that all our Blessedness is owing not to any Works of Righteousness which we have done, but purely to the Mercy of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, and when it also teaches us that our being Regenerated and Renewed is the Work
of

* Act. xx. 32. † 1 Tim. vi. 3.

of his Holy Spirit, or that they, who are doing Works of Righteousness, are God's Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works. And well may it be said to be the Truth which is after Godliness, when it likewise teaches us that there is no having Acceptance with God, no being justified and saved by his Mercy and Grace in Christ, unless we are Regenerated and renewed, and are found in Works of Righteousness.

Both these Notions of the Gospel should be equally regarded, and we should set them both before us at the same Time ; and take the utmost Care, that, in recommending one, nothing be offered to the Prejudice of the other. Thus doing we shall imitate the Apostle : For as he does not frustrate the Grace of God, by teaching that Righteousness comes by the Law*, so he does not make void the Law, by Speaking of a Faith as justifying and saving, which does not make us the Servants of God†. He does not fail to ascribe our Acceptance with God, our Justification, and, in a Word, our Salvation to his Grace and Mercy in Christ, and yet at the same Time, assures us, that if we
are

* Gal. ii. 21. † Rom. iii. 31.

are not renewed in the Spirit of our Minds, we have no Reason to think that we partake of this Blessedness. For thus he speaks. *Not by Works of Righteousness which we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us, by the Washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that being justified by his Grace, we should be made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life*.*

There is no Reason therefore for our Author's censuring the popular Preachers for not 'Speaking any Thing like the 'Language of the Gospel, without cautioning, mincing or clogging it with 'some exceptive *but, if, only*†.' For is it not agreeable to the Apostles Sentiments to say that we are saved by the Mercy of God, *but* we must have the Washing of Regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost; or that we are justified *if* we are the Doers, the Sincere tho' not perfect Doers of the Law‡; and not Hearers only, or that we live by Faith, *if* we have that Faith that makes us just||?

Having mentioned the Words of St. John. *This is his Commandment that we should*

Tit. iii. 5, 6, 7. † Page 285. ‡ Rom. ii. 13.
|| Heb. x. 38.

*should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ** ; The Author adds, ‘ not that we
 ‘ should do any Thing to obtain Life,
 ‘ but that we should live by what he hath
 ‘ done†.’ And if by this he means that
 we must not think to obtain Life by what
 we do, he speaks agreeably to the Gospel
 as a Doctrine of Grace : But it follows,
 ‘ It is a Commandment not requiring any
 ‘ Thing of us, but bestowing Life by
 ‘ the Knowledge which it conveys. For
 ‘ the Belief or Knowledge of Christ is
 ‘ Happiness, as Jesus says, *this is Life*
 ‘ *eternal to know thee, the only true God,*
 ‘ *and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*
 ‘ The Belief or Knowledge of a comfort-
 ‘ able Truth is not Work or Labour,
 ‘ but Rest and Peace.’ And if by this
 the Author would teach us, that we may
 obtain Life through Jesus Christ without
 doing any Thing, it is evident that he
 contradicts the Gospel as it is the Truth
 which is after Godliness.

But indeed the bare Reading the Words
 of St. *John*, which immediately precede
 and follow those which our Author has
 quoted, will be sufficient to shew, that
 they give him not the least Occasion for

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Speaking

Speaking in the manner he does. For just before we are told that *whatsoever we ask we receive of God, because we keep his Commandments, and do those Things that are pleasing in his Sight*, and then it is not only said, that *this is his Commandment that we believe in the Name of his Son Jesus Christ*; but, that *we love one another as he gave us Commandment*: And it follows, *And he that keepeth his Commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him.*

The Apostle speaks of Christ as the Propitiation for our Sins*, and of his being manifested to take away Sin†. And that we might live through him‡. And he wrote his Gospel that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that believing we might have Life through his Name||. And yet he was far from teaching us that if we had but the simple Belief of this we should find Acceptance with God, though we did not in other Respects study to please him. This appears from what has been already said, and may be confirmed by such Passages as these. *If we say that we have Fellowship with God and Walk in Darknes, we lie and do*
not

* 1 Ep. ii. 2. † Ch. iii. 5. ‡ Ch. iv. 9. || Joh. xx. 31.

not the Truth, but if we walk in the Light, as he is in the Light we have Fellowship one with another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all Sin. Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments.† This is the Victory that overcometh the World even our Faith‡. Follow not that which is Evil, but that which is Good. He that doth good is of God; but he that doth evil hath not seen God||.*

These and other Passages of the same Nature, with which the Holy Scriptures abound, evidently shew us that they only are accepted of God and have Fellowship with him, who have forsaken the ways of Sin and begun to walk in the ways of Holiness, and keep his Commandments; and that they only have that Faith in Christ Jesus which is Justifying and Saving, who have so far overcome the World as to be Followers of Righteousness, and doing their Duty.

But our Author observes that ‘ the Gospel, or the Report concerning the Truth wears the same uniform Aspect toward all, considering all Mankind as perfectly on a Level, regarding even those whom it relieves as Children of

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‘ Wrath

* 1 Joh i. 6. 7.

† Ch. ii. 3.

‡ Ch. v. 4.

|| 3 Ep. ii.

‘ Wrath even as others*.’ And in one Sense the Observation is just : For according to the Report of the Gospel, Christ died for all, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting Life. And agreeably to this, Repentance and Remission of Sins are preached in his Name to all who have the Gospel, and thus far it should relieve all ; it should keep even the Chief of Sinners from lying down in Despair, and saying, *It is in vain for us to look to Christ that we may be saved.*

This Grace of God has appeared to all who have the Gospel. But surely there is no Colour of Reason for thinking that all are perfectly on a Level, as to the *actual Enjoyment* of the Benefits flowing from the Death of Christ ; and that all are made accepted in him, and have Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins. To assert this is to make void the Law ; to pervert the Gospel of Christ, and to turn the Grace of our God into Lasciviousness.

It follows in the Letters, ‘ the Pride of Man, which must always have some distinguishing Qualification to feed upon, cannot digest this ; ’ The Gospels regarding

garding all Mankind as perfectly on a Level. ' So each one reasons thus ; seeing many shall perish, and seeing the Gospel says nothing to me, but what it says to every one, what Comfort can I reap from it, unless I can find about myself at least one Grain of Odds casting the Ballance in my Favour, in Comparison with others, or in Comparison with what I myself have hitherto been*.' But has not the most humble Person on Earth Cause for thus reasoning? For if with the Children of Disobedience we walk in the Lusts of the Flesh, fulfilling the Desires of the Flesh and of the Mind, surely we ought to think, that, notwithstanding all that Christ has done, we are in the same Condemnation with them ; and that, without some distinguishing Qualifications, we shall be doomed by the Saviour himself to everlasting Punishment.

There is no Subject more awfull ; none more important than this ; none more worthy of our most serious Thoughts. How concerned should every one be to find something in himself, by which he is really distinguished from the workers of Iniquity, to whom the Great Judge of all

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the

* Ibid,

the World will say, at the last Day, *Depart from me, ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels!* But here our Author adopts the Words of Mr. Prior as serving his Purpose,

‘ That cruel something unpossess,
‘ Corrodes and leavens all the Rest.

‘ And indeed a cruel something it is,’ if as he speaks, ‘ it stings to Death all ‘ who covet it, and all who have it ; all ‘ who bewail the want of it, and all who possess it*.’ But if this be the Case, we are necessarily miserable: For we are expressly assured that without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord†, and that as a Motive to engage us to follow it. But our Saviour himself has declared, that they are blessed who hunger and thirst, and consequently follow after Righteousness, for they shall be filled‡.

It is true that if a Man strive for Masteries he is not crowned, except he strive lawfully||. They who wrestled in the Olympick Games, if they transgressed the Rules prescribed for that Exercise, did but labour in vain. And if they who follow after Righteousness, pay no Regard to the Rule given

* Page 95. † Heb. xii. 14. ‡ Mat. v. 6.
|| 2 Tim. ii. 5.

given us for this in the Scriptures, they will lose the Things which they have wrought, but acting agreeably to this Rule, they may depend upon it that they shall receive a full Reward.

The grand Rule to be observed, that we may succeed in following after Righteousness, is to seek it by Faith in Christ Jesus, and not as if it were to be had by the Works of the Law. For if Christ be to us a Stone of Stumbling, and a Rock of Offence, if he be neglected, and we have no Regard to what he has done, all the Pains we may take in seeking it will be to no purpose*.

It may well be said that this Rule is transgressed by those, who being ignorant of God's Righteousness, and going about to establish their own, have not submitted themselves to the Righteousness of God†: But we may justly speak of those as observing it, who consider Christ as the End of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believeth, and who are above all Things concerned to win Christ, and to be found in him, not having their own Righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Jesus.

But

* Rom. ix. 31. &c.

† Rom. x. 3.

But our Author tells us that ‘ if we turn
 ‘ our Eyes to the Scripture it will appear,
 ‘ that this Something is the great Engine
 ‘ employed to blind the Minds of Men,
 ‘ lest the Light of the Gospel of the
 ‘ Glory of Christ should shine unto them :
 ‘ —It will appear, that if we imagine that
 ‘ we possess, or desire to attain any requi-
 ‘ site to our Acceptance with God, either
 ‘ aside from, or in Connexion with the
 ‘ bare Work of Christ, Christ is become of
 ‘ no Effect to us.—Christ shall profit us
 ‘ nothing*. And the Observation is very
 just, if all that he means is that this Some-
 thing, this Requisite, this favourite Dis-
 tinction, as it is called, is not considered
 as the Ground of our Acceptance with
 God, or the Reason why God should be
 well pleased with us ; and consequently,
 ‘ the Foundation, Light and Life of our
 ‘ whole Religion†.’ For other Founda-
 tion for our Hopes can no Man lay than
 that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus‡.
 But this notwithstanding, that there is no
 being accepted of God unless we have
 Something that distinguishes us from
 others, and from what we ourselves once
 were, and that there is no enjoying the
 future

* Page 96. † Page 95. ‡ 1 Cor. iii. 11.

future Blessedness without being righteous, is very evident from this of the Apostle, *Know ye not that the Unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor Adulterers, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, &c. shall inherit the Kingdom of God; And such were some of you; but ye are Washed, but ye are Sanctified, but ye are Justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*.*

Unless therefore we are Righteous all our Hopes are vain. And yet our Author will have it that we don't do well to follow after Righteousness. For he tells us that 'the Scripture asserts that all
' who attain to Righteousness are such as
' were not seeking after it. The Gentiles
' which followed not after Righteousness,
' have attained to Righteousness, even the
' Righteousness which is of Faith. But
' *Israel* which followed, hath not attained†. I was found of them that sought
' me not, I was made manifest unto them
' that asked not for me†.' And it must be granted that some among the Gentiles attained to that Righteousness which they
did

* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. † Rom. ix. 30, 31.
† Ch. x. 20. p. 96.

did not follow after. For their Eyes were opened, and they were turned from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God, and were sanctified and justified by the Faith that is in Jesus, upon the very first hearing of the Gospel. It is also granted that many of the *Israelites*, who followed after Righteousness, did not attain it: But it cannot be proved that this was the Case of all the Gentiles who attained to Righteousness; or of all the *Israelites* who followed after it. But however it might have been with any of them before, this is certain that immediately on their believing in Christ they became Followers of Righteousness.

It is said that 'Righteousness comes
 • unto Men always unsent for; not meet-
 • ing Men inquiring after it, but over-
 • taking them when running away*.' Thus it was indeed as to *Saul*, and thus it has been in many other Instances; but this does not prove that it is the same with all.

We are told that these Words, *I was found of them that sought me not*, 'plainly
 • shew that Faith comes not by any Hu-
 • man Endeavours, or by the Use of any
 • Means, even under the greatest Advan-
 tages

‘ tages that Men can enjoy ; but of that
 ‘ same Sovereign good Pleasure which
 ‘ provided the grand Thing to be believ-
 ‘ ed*.’ And if by this no more were
 meant than that Faith is the Operation
 and Gift of God, it might well be received
 as a Doctrine agreeable to the Gospel as
 the Word of his Grace : But what can be
 more opposite to it considered as the
 Truth which is after Godliness, than the
 teaching that all Human Endeavours to
 attain the Righteousness which is of Faith
 are not merely unnecessary and vain, but
 even prejudicial, as they certainly are, if
 they only attain it who are not seeking
 after it, or if they who are running away
 from God are the only Persons that find
 him ? What if Human Endeavours will
 not do of themselves, must they therefore
 be looked upon as wholly useless ? *Paul*
 may plant, and *Apollos* may water, and
 both will labour in vain, unless God gives
 the Increase†. But this notwithstanding,
Paul did well to plant, and *Apollos* to
 water. We must do that which is our
 Duty, and look to God for Success ; and,
 blessed be his Name, we do not want for
 encouragement.

I

I am therefore so far from joining with our Author in censuring the Sermons of our most popular Preachers, for being
 ‘ adapted to the Purpose of setting the
 ‘ Minds of the People in Motion to do
 ‘ something toward their Peace with
 ‘ God*,’ that I cannot but think that the more proper their Sermons are to answer this End, the more they are to be admired and commended ; and that, with a View to this, they have done very well in letting their Hearers know, that unless they have acquainted themselves with God, and are at Peace with him, they are under the Curse of his Holy Law, and can no ways be delivered from his Wrath, but by that Faith which working by Love purifies their Hearts. And altho’ ‘ Convictions of Guilt are often awakened by
 ‘ Sickness, the Approach of Death, and
 ‘ other Calamities†,’ yet it must be owned, that the Preaching of the Law is one Means very proper to raise these Convictions in the Mind of a Sinner.

It is justly observed that ‘ the Divine
 ‘ Mercy is not narrow and limited, nor
 ‘ like that of Man backward to interpose
 ‘ till some inviting and amiable Requi-
 ‘ site

‘ site appear in the Object*.’ But it ought to be considered, that as long as the Sinner is not convinced of his Guilt, he is backward to receive that Mercy which God is ready to bestow upon him. Hence it is that our Blessed Saviour speaks in this Manner to such as trusted in themselves that they were Righteous; *They that be whole need not a Physician but they that be Sick : I am not come to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance†.*

It is said that ‘ there is no Occasion for
 ‘ popular Preachers to lead Men through
 ‘ their idle Process of the Law, before
 ‘ they display the glad Tiding set before
 ‘ them‡.’ And indeed I see no Reason for their not displaying the glad Tidings of the Gospel at the same Time that they set forth the Terrors of the Law : But methinks the talking of the *idle Process of the Law of God* looks as if our Author thought that the Preaching of it is wholly needless, and the rather because he adds,

‘ If Christian Teachers would imitate
 ‘ the Apostles in Preaching, let them
 ‘ hold forth the Sacred Truth, Christ
 ‘ Crucified, the Divine Wisdom and
 F Power

* Page 291. † Mat. ix. 12, 13. ‡ Page 292.

‘ Power to Salvation and leave it wholly
 ‘ to God to make Converts. The mer-
 ‘ ciful Truth is allsufficient to save : It
 ‘ needs no requisite for Man to produce
 ‘ a Relish for it’*. And it is certain that
 after all that the most zealous and popu-
 lar Preachers can do, they must leave it
 wholly to God to make Converts. For
 that is his Work and not theirs. So that
 the most able Ministers of the New Test-
 ament should look to him for his Blessing
 on their Ministry ; and give him the Praise
 and Glory of all the Converts that are
 ever made by it. For neither is he that
 Planteth any Thing, nor he that Water-
 eth, but God that giveth the Increase†.
 It is also certain that unless they hold
 forth the Sacred Truth, *Christ Crucified*,
 they may well think that all their Labour
 will be in vain : But surely we may say,
 that the holding forth of this Truth is
 not the only Thing to which they are to
 attend. No, but that after the Apostle’s Ex-
 ample knowing the Terrors of the Lord they
 should do all they can to persuade men‡ ;
 and make use of the Law as a School-
 Master to convince them of their Guilt,
 and lead them to Christ that they may be
 justified

* Page 292. † 1 Cor. iii. 7. ‡ 2 Cor. v. 2.

justified by Faith in him*. And agreeably to this we may say that the Preaching of the Law is very proper to prepare Men for receiving the Gospel.

But says our Author ' what preparative, what requisite had *Paul*, when the merciful Truth surpris'd him on the Road to *Damascus* ? And if we enquire into the Effect it had upon him, we find it made such a Revolution in his Sentiments, and all the Springs of his Life, as if we should see a mighty Torrent changed from East to West by the Shock of an Earthquake†'.

And yet, excepting the kind Expostulation, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me* ? This merciful Truth was no other than this, *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest, it is hard for thee to kick against the Pricks*. And this through the Power of Divine Grace was the Means not only of convincing him of his evil Ways, and the dreadful Consequences of persisting in them, but of changing his Heart, and of making him the faithful Servant of Christ, who just before was a blasphemer of his Holy Name, a Persecutor of his People,

F 2

and

* Gal. iii. 24. † Page 292.

and as injurious as possible to them, and to his Interest in the World.

And as from considering the Case of this Convert we may learn the Necessity and good of a thorough Conviction of Guilt, so it may well recommend the Preaching of the Law, which, as was said is very proper to raise this Conviction in the Mind of a Sinner.

‘ The Apostle tells us indeed, that he
 ‘ was designed for a Pattern to them
 ‘ which should hereafter believe to Life
 everlasting*.’ But it cannot be thought
 that he meant to tell us that they all
 should be converted to the Faith of Jesus
 in the same manner that he was ; as that
 Christ should appear to them in Person,
 and at a Time when they sought not after
 him, but were running away from him ;
 and that the Day of their first Conviction
 should be the Day of their Conversion ;
 no, but his Words are as if he had said,
 ‘ Although I was the chief of Sinners,
 ‘ yet I have obtained Mercy, to the End
 ‘ that all awakened Souls, how heinous
 ‘ soever their Sins may have been, may be
 ‘ fully assured, that believing on Christ,
 ‘ they should be treated by him in the
 ‘ same

‘ same kind and gracious Manner. When
 ‘ such a notorious Rebel as I have been,
 ‘ have not only received the Free Pardon
 ‘ of all my Sins, but a Title through
 ‘ Grace to Life everlasting, let not any
 ‘ lye down in Despair, let ’em not be
 ‘ saying, it is in vain for us to look unto
 ‘ Christ that we may be saved’.

We are told that ‘ no Man before he
 ‘ believes can have any Ground of Hope
 ‘ but what is fictitious and vain*’. But
 it ought to be observed that there is a
 Hope which encourages us to believe, as
 well as a Hope which springs from Faith,
 and consequently presupposes it. And in
 the former Sense of the Word, tho’ not in
 the latter, it may very well be said that,
 the considering this Apostle as a Pattern
 or Example of the Mercy of Christ to
 those who believe on him, may give even
 unbelievers that Ground for Hope which
 should in Reason engage them to believe.
 The same we may say of the Words of
 St. Peter, to him give all the Prophets
 witness, that through his Name, whoso-
 ever believeth in him shall receive Remis-
 sion of Sins†. Our Author’s Faith in-
 deed, *An Assent to the Truth of the Gospel,*

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is necessary to our having this Hope. But this Hope is a great inducement, if not absolutely necessary, to that Faith which the Scripture speaks of as justifying and saving.

Every one therefore, who has such a Sense of his Guilt that he cannot but look upon himself as the chief of Sinners, would do well to have this Pattern of the exceeding abundant Grace of our Lord in his Eye, as proper to encourage him to believe that he may obtain Life everlasting: But then let him not fail to observe, that he will in vain please himself with the Thoughts of being thus blessed, unless, after the Example of this Convert, he receives Christ Jesus as his Lord as well as Saviour, and yields himself to him as his Servant, at the same Time that he looks to him, and trusts in him for Salvation.

As *Saul* of an Enemy to Christ became his Servant the very Moment of his believing in him, so the same may be said of the Malefactor who prayed to Jesus on the Cross, and indeed of every true Believer. The same Revolution is made in his Sentiments, and in all the Springs of Life. This is the Language of every believing Soul,

Soul, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do.* He is turned from the Power of Satan unto God, and as he resolves to become a better Man than he was before, so he immediately acts agreeably to this pious Resolution, putting away the Evil of his doings from before the Eyes of the Lord; ceasing to do Evil and beginning to do well, and upon such a Principle as is proper to lead him to a patient Continuance in well-doing.

As to the Malefactor I have mentioned there is no occasion to enquire how it was with him before he was led forth to be crucified. It is sufficient to observe, that how vile soever he might have been, yet, when number'd among true Believers, there was no Reason for calling him 'a worthless Fellow*;' or to say that 'he saw no difference betwixt himself and his fellow Criminal†'. And one would wonder what should lead our Author to speak of him in this Manner, when, but a little before, he had told us, that 'being given to understand, by what he heard and saw, what for a Person he was who hung crucified betwixt him and his fellow Transgressor, on seeing
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‘ what was done on the Green Tree, fearing what might befall the Dry, so dreading a far greater Punishment in the other World, than he was presently suffering in this, he dissents from, and rebukes his Fellow for joining with the Jews, and presents his Supplication to Jesus. And thus he shews us what his Faith was*’. A Faith by which such a gracious Change was wrought in him as sufficiently distinguished him from his wicked Companion.

It cannot be said that either this Malefactor, or *Saul*, prayed for this Faith. For God prevented them both with the Blessings of his Goodness, and was found of them when they sought him not. But as to all who are concerned to believe to the saving of their Souls, it is very proper, after the Example of some Preachers, whom our Author has seen attending Criminals led to Execution, to direct them to pray for a *new Heart*†; or in other Words, for that Faith by which they may be sanctified; that Faith which working by Love purifies the Heart: For no other Faith is justifying and saving. They are not indeed to pray for this new Heart, ‘ that so they may

‘ may be more meet Objects for the Compassion of Jesus*, but they ought to pray for it as that without which there is no possibility of their being justified and saved.

We are told that ‘ all who believe the Gospel find in it a Righteousness sufficient to recommend them to the Divine Favour, at all Events, whether they live or die, without seeing the least Difference betwixt themselves and any dying Malefactor†’. And I freely own that this Righteousness is sufficient to recommend us to the Divine Favour, and that nothing else can do it. But it ought to be observed, that it never was designed to do this for so much as one wicked Person without making him righteous. There is no doubt but that Christ is able to save to the uttermost, but he saves none but those who come unto God by him‡; none but those whom he makes his People, and he saves them from their Sins§. He is sent to us to bless us and it is in him only, that we either are, or can be blessed; but he blesteth none but those whom he turneth away from their Iniquities§.

Sup-

* Page 325. † Page 317. ‡ Heb. vii. 23.
 § Mat. i. 21. § Heb. iii. 20.

Supposing therefore, that there had been no other difference betwixt the two Malefactors who were crucified with Jesus but this, that one of them railed on him as an Impostor, and the other believed that he was the Christ, they had both perished in their Sins. For if he who prayed to him, *Lord remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom*, had regarded iniquity in his Heart* ; he would have received no other Answer than this, *I know thee not, depart from me, thou worker of Iniquity*†.

The after Life and carriage of *Saul* was a plain Proof of his being a sincere Convert, from the very Moment of his being a Believer. And as to this dying Criminal we have all the Evidence, that one in his Circumstances could give of it's being the same with him. He acted becoming a real Convert, a true Penitent in rebuking him who had been his Companion in Wickedness. His manner of speaking, *dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same Condemnation* may fairly be considered as an Intimation, that he himself had the fear of God before his Eyes. He was so sensible of his Sin that he openly acknowledges the Equity of the Sentence which was past upon

* Psal. lxi. 18. † Mat. vii. 23, 23.

upon him, and we indeed justly ; for we receive the due Reward of our Deeds. And he vindicates the Character of Jesus, *but this Man hath done nothing amiss*. But be this as it may, the Answer he received to his Prayer, puts this Matter beyond all dispute. For if a gracious Change had not been wrought in him, our blessed Saviour could not have said to him, *to Day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*, without contradicting the Doctrine which he had taught the People upon all Occasions ; *except ye repent ye shall perish**. *Except a Man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God†*. Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven†.

Agreeable to this is that of St. Paul, if any Man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha||. For it is the same as to say if any Man obey not the Lord Jesus let him be accursed : For this is Love that we keep his Commandments*. And as he himself has told us, if any Man love him he well keep his Words†.

Christ

* Luk. xiii. 3, 5. † Joh. iii. 3, 5. ‡ Mat. vii. 21. || 1 Cor. xvi. 22. * 1 Joh. v. 3. † Joh. x. v. 21, 23.

Christ indeed has said that *he that believeth on him is not condemned** ; but that we may reconcile this to his own Doctrine and that of his Apostle we must understand him as speaking of that believing from which Love and Obedience do immediately spring, as light from the Sun. For there is no such thing, as being justified and yet condemned ; blessed and yet accursed at the same Time ; justified and blessed as believing in Christ ; but condemned and accursed because we do not love and obey him. And from this it evidently follows that as there is no being saved without Faith, so neither without love and obedience.

It is the Nature of true Faith, that Faith which is justifying and saving to produce Love, and it is the Nature of Love to produce Obedience, as therefore he who believes on the Lord Jesus loves him in Sincerity, so his Soul is saying to him, *Lord thou art my Lord. I am thy Servant. What wilt thou have me to do ?*

It is indeed setting the Character of true Believers quite out of our reach, in the present State, to speak of them as perfect in their obedience. For if we say that we
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* Joh. iii. 18.

have no Sin, we deceive ourselves and the Truth is not in us*. But then we must not think that any of them are *ungodly* or *unrighteous*. For the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of Men, who hold the Truth in unrighteousness†. Agreeable to this we find that they only are said to have the End everlasting Life, who being made free from Sin, and become Servants to God have their Fruit unto Holiness‡; and that this Character is given of all who are in Christ Jesus, to whom there is no condemnation, that they walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit||.

And altho' they, who being justified by Faith have Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, are not perfect in their Obedience, yet it may be said of them that they have respect unto all the Commandments*; all God's Judgments are before them, and they put not away any of his Statutes from them, no, not even that, which is the most directly contrary to their own Iniquity†. They hunger and thirst after Righteousness‡, and their Hopes of being made like to Christ by seeing him

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* 1 Joh. i. 8. † Rom. i. 18. ‡ Rom. vi. 22.
 || Rom. viii. 1. * Psal. cxix. 6. † Psal. xviii.
 22, 23. ‡ Mat. v. 10.

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as he is lead them to purify themselves
as he is pure*. Suppose therefore that we
are for keeping all the known Command-
ments of God, one only excepted we are
to consider ourselves not as the Lovers
and Servants of Christ, but as Trans-
gressors who pay no Regard to his Au-
thority, which is the same in all his
Precepts†.

‘ Our Author’s Objection to this Doct-
‘ rine, namely,’ that it ‘ animates Men
‘ to work out their own Justification be-
‘ fore God, by diligently following after
‘ Righteousness†,’ has I think been already
obviated ; but that nothing that has been
said may have this fatal Effect on any of
my Readers, I shall conclude with observ-
ing, that this enters into the Character of
such as believe to the saving of their Souls,
that as they worship God in the Spirit,
and love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ
in Sincerity, so they rejoice in him as the
Foundation of all their Hopes of the di-
vine Favour||, and have no confidence in
the Flesh, or in any works of Righteous-
ness which they have done§ ; but are look-
ing for the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ
unto eternal Life. 4 00 58

* 1 John iii. 3. † Jam. ii. 10, 11. ‡ Page 328.
|| 1 Cor. iii. 11. § Phil. iii. 3, 6. * Jud. 21.

